

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 44-A, No. 11

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

November 2019

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

POSITIVE

I. Eleven years of growth and development by the *San Quentin News*. Revived in 2008, it is based at and staffed by 16 men, plus additional writers, all imprisoned at San Quentin State Prison in California, population 4,223. In addition, there are dozens of outside volunteers. The monthly newspaper now has a press run of 30,000 copies--distributed to all 35 California adult prisons, four youth facilities, two county jails, dozens of non-California prisoners and hundreds of other individuals.

Each monthly edition has 20 pages, many in full-color. In addition to articles in English there are now some in Spanish and/or Vietnamese. Among other features, there is now also a full-color quarterly magazine and a website.

Currently there is frequent outside print, radio and TV coverage and a constant stream of visitors, including assistance by journalism students and a variety of media professionals. Outside financial support supports some paid staff. The mission statement is: "to advance social justice and restore communities by reporting on inmate rehabilitative efforts within San Quentin State Prison and beyond." Address: *San Quentin News*, 1 Main Street, San Quentin CA 94964.

II. *The Healing Justice: Ending Mass Incarceration* 2-day November Conference organized by Psychologists for Social Responsibility at The Wright Institute in Berkeley CA.

The goals were to work toward creating a learning space, to strengthen existing social connections, and to build a broader community of social transformation to end mass incarceration.

There were many strong and informative workshops. One powerful example is "Liberate the Caged Voices" formed to achieving parole for the leaders of the Hunger Strike in California. It is sponsored by *California Prison Focus* which holds their monthly activist meetings at: 4408 Market St--Suite A, Oakland CA 94608; 510-342-9560.

NEGATIVE

I. Holding 69,550 migrant children in U.S. government custody over the past year. (Do not let this seem irrelevant: over 65,000 New Jersey children have grown up with a parent in prison.) It is true that under the Obama administration in 2014, more than 60,000 children arrived and were detained at the U.S. southern border. So this was *only* 14% more.... Although enough, as they say, to overflow a typical NFL stadium. And more children are detained away from their parents in the U.S. than in any other country according to U.N. statistics. Fiscal year 2019's number is up 42% from that of 2018.

Some of these children have already been deported. Some have been reunited with family members in the U.S. And about 4,000 are still in government custody. Causing immeasurable levels of trauma, which is acknowledged by the government itself.

Nine out of ten of the migrant children detained last year came from Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador, with fewer than three percent from Mexico. The U.S. has supported the governments in those three countries for decades. Violence, abuse and murder are rampant there and are the reasons people give for leaving them....

II. There are more than 5,200 people doing Life Without Parole (LWOP) sentences in California alone. As with executions, and imprisonment itself, LWOP is unevenly and unfairly applied to people of color, people with mental disabilities, and people who cannot afford costly legal representation. LWOP is unfair, unjust, wasteful, protracted and does not make us safer. It is a living death sentence.

* * *

"Our war should be against prejudice, racism--when and wherever it shows its ugly face. And it doesn't matter who, what color or race."

--S.M., TX

"Our spirits are strong. We are together at last with ourselves and the world of our ancestors; we are proud before our children and our generations unborn...."

--K.R., SC

POR LA INDEPENDENCIA EN PUERTO RICO

En agosto de 2019, miles de personas salieron a las calles de Puerto Rico a celebrar la dimisión del gobernador Ricardo Rosselló, luego de 12 días de enormes protestas en la isla. Esas protestas se iniciaron cuando el Centro de Periodismo Investigativo de Puerto Rico publicó casi 900 páginas de mensajes de texto entre Rosselló y su equipo de trabajo. Los mensajes del grupo estaban plagados de misoginia, homofobia, obscenidades y violencia. En algunos de ellos se burlaban de las víctimas del Huracán María. Algunos de los artistas más importantes de Puerto Rico estuvieron al frente de las protestas que generaron estas revelaciones, entre ellos Ricky Martin, Residente, iLe y Bad Bunny. La canción "Afilando los cuchillos", escrita e interpretada por Residente, Bad Bunny e iLe, se convirtió en un himno de las protestas.

To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes--with the CPR return address in the upper left-hand corner.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests in order for us to have our only permanent mailing list--the one for our January holiday/new calendar (see above)--be as accurate as possible.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; to maintain our best possible access to all of our prison-based readers, please do NOT mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail."

Many,many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for posting our Newsletter on-line for free downloading and distribution. All issues since 2009 are at: www.realcostofprisons.org--this is a GREAT site! To all: Thank you for your support!

Human Rights Pen Pals

It is a racial justice community organization, in solidarity with people in California's solitary confinement cells. It promotes principled, mutually educational relationships between people in solitary and human rights supporters outside. At: P.O. Box 71378, Oakland CA 94612

THE JAIL

"In October, In solidarity with youth climate activists, I was one of the protesters who occupied the governor's office in Santa Fe NM, despite threats of arrest. We were told that the jail was stinky and served awful food. We refused to leave. Then we received citations for criminal trespassing and were released...."

Stay of Execution

Just five days before Rodney Reed was scheduled to be killed by the state of Texas, Reed, who has spent 20 years on Death Row, has had his case ordered returned to the trial court for examination of his claims of innocence and of misconduct by the original prosecutors.

It comes as no surprise that the murder victim involved was "white" and Reed is African-American. Further, the person who actually committed the murder is not only white, but also a former police officer....

MASS COMMUTATION

In Oklahoma, the state with the largest incarceration rate (stated as adults per every 100,00 of the population), released more than 450 imprisoned people on Monday, November 4. Until then, the largest single day commutation, of 330 federal prisoners, was by then-president Obama, on his last full day in office.

In 2018, Oklahoma imprisoned 1,079 people per 100,000 adults in the population. The legislation enabling the release, with retroactive reduction of sentences for low-level and nonviolent drug and property convictions, was passed in May. The intervening months were used in preparation, such as holding 28 job fairs for those eligible. More than 900 people applied for early release and the state is reported to be anticipating 2,000 empty prison beds by the end of the year.

The Right to Vote

In 2018, the voters of Florida voted to restore voting rights to up to 1.5 million people with felony records. After a year of delays and restrictions by the Legislature, 18 people were actually re-enfranchised. This was due to a federal judge temporarily blocking the law which required 17 of them who successfully pled that they could not afford to pay legal costs otherwise due.

VOTE NO RIKERS, OLD OR NEW

The Rikers Island jail complex which holds approximately 10,000 human beings, has long been known for its outrageous conditions and treatment of people. Now there is a \$10 billion expansion plan to build four borough based jails although without a guarantee to close Rikers. Our communities need to use our resources for housing, schools, subways, jobs, mental health centers.

For more information, contact:

DRUM-Desis Rising Up & Moving, 72-18

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